

SIX COMMON STEREOTYPES ABOUT FEMINISM

— DEBUNKED

Feminists often find themselves on a rhetorical treadmill, desperately working towards the goal of equality, but forced to expend precious energy and resources battling stereotypes that impede our ability to truly achieve progress.

It's time to debunk these stereotypes once and for all; they have no place in 2025 or beyond.

FEMINISTS HATE MEN. Do we? In a word, no (although we readily admit to disliking the words, actions or attitudes of sexist men). Feminism isn't about hating men — it's about eliminating sexism and oppression for all genders. Feminists often are men. It's not about gender; it's a question of believing in equality.

FEMINISM IS SEXIST. This bears repeating: feminism promotes egalitarianism, not sexism. If you find this concept troublesome, then it's not feminists who are guilty of sexism.

FEMINISTS ARE ANTI-FAMILY & ANTI-BABY. This sweeping, inaccurate generalisation is primarily rooted in feminism's support of reproductive justice, including abortion rights. But what's largely omitted from this conversation is feminists' belief that every child should be a wanted child. To this end, feminism embraces the full spectrum of choice — motherhood, adoption and yes, abortion — not because we are anti-baby, but because we respect and value family.

FEMINISTS DON'T HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOUR. False. Have you heard of Tina Fey? Amy Poehler? Lizz Winstead? Aziz Ansari? This isn't to say that every funny feminist is a celebrity, but they certainly prove that feminists can laugh.

Those who think all feminists are simply killjoys are missing the larger point: the issues feminism fights — violence against women, economic inequality, racism and LGBT discrimination, to name a few — are of a serious nature and therefore require an equally serious response.

FEMINISM IS PASSÉ. Sure, women are entitled (in most countries) to vote, hold political office and work outside of the home, but there is still much ground to be gained. In an era in which racism, homo- and transphobia abound, and women are denied bodily autonomy, while suffering sexual and physical violence at astounding rates globally, feminism is still very much needed. And even in those societies in which laws aimed at protecting and promoting women's rights exist in writing, implementation and accountability are still required. In other words, feminist activism isn't going anywhere because there is too much work left to be done.

ONLY WOMEN CAN BE FEMINISTS. While feminism has historically been largely a movement for women by women, anyone can be a feminist, including men. That said, it's vital for feminist men to be sensitive of their gendered privilege and aware of the historical role men have played in women's oppression.

Feminism is, when all's said and done, an inclusive social justice movement that envisions and strives for a world in which women, men, girls and boys all benefit from gender equality. Only good things will result from that type of global environment; so let's collectively raise our voices to put an end to unfair and unsubstantiated stereotypes that thwart progress and perpetrate social inequality.